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# THE PARISH

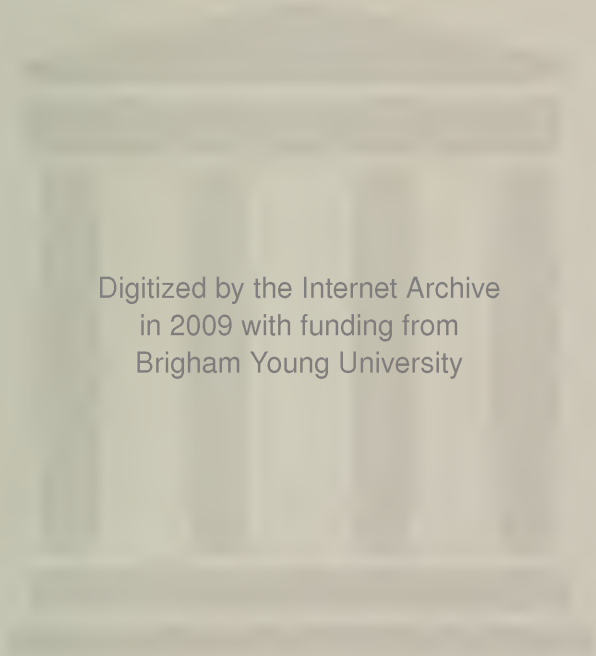
# REGISTER



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Of Rog' Lee gentilmā here  
lyeth the son. Benedic' Lee  
crylon' 16th' soule ihu p̄dō

BRASS OF "CHRYSOM CHILD," A.D. 1520,  
CHESHAM BOIS CHURCH, CO. BUCKS.

# THE PARISH REGISTER

BY

WILLIAM BRADBROOK, M.R.C.S.



1910

CHAS. A. BERNAU, WALTON-ON-THAMES, ENGLAND



*Wholesale Agents*

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IS INSCRIBED, BY KIND PERMISSION,  
TO  
THE REV. EDWARD COOKSON, M.A..  
OF IPSWICH,  
TO WHOM THE WRITER IS DEEPLY OBLIGED FOR  
GENEROUS HELP AND SUGGESTION.



# The Parish Register.

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## Chronological Table

The registration of baptisms, marriages and burials in England was first introduced by Sir Thomas Cromwell in 27 Henry VIII. (1535), but temporarily abandoned because of the opposition excited.

1538. (30 Henry VIII.) The project successfully initiated.
1552. Injunctions to this end repeated, and also in 1558.
1555. Cardinal Pole ordered the addition of sponsors' names to the baptismal entries.
1597. (39 Eliz.) All registers ordered to be copied on to parchment, and transcripts made annually, of the previous year's entries and sent to the Bishops' registries, and regulations formulated for their safe keeping. 25th Oct., 1597.

## The Parish

1603. (1 Jac. I.). The 70th Canon of the Church affirmed the preceeding.
1645. (20 Car. I.). The Directory of Public Worship directed the dates of births and deaths (as well as dates of baptism and burial) to be recorded.
- 1649-1660. During this period many registers were imperfectly kept.
1653. 22nd Sept. The election by the parishioners of the "parish register" was enacted.
1654. 29th Sept. Civil marriage by magistrate ordered. These marriages were legalized (1660) 12 Car. II. c. 33.
1660. (12 Car. II.). The Restoration of the King, and the evicted and persecuted clergy.
1667. Burial in woollen enacted. 19 Car. II.
1678. Burial in woollen more strigently enacted. 30 Car. II.
1698. Duties on register entries imposed for five years. 6 & 7 Will. III. (1694-8).

# Register

7

1711. Proper register books with ruled and numbered pages ordered. 10 Anne.
1735. 9 Geo. II. "The law now forbids ye keeping any records in Latin, etc." (Clyst St. George.)
1752. 25 Geo. II. New style calendar ordered by law.
1753. 26 Geo. II. Hardwicke's Marriage Act (took effect 25th March, 1754).
1783. 23 Geo. III. c. 71. Duty of 3d. imposed on each entry in register.
1794. 34 Geo. III. Duty repealed.
1801. First Governmental census.
1812. 52 Geo. III. c. 146. Rose's Act placed registers under control of Registrar General, new system introduced necessitating special books of uniform design.
1814. The Woollen Acts of Charles II. repealed.
1831. List of registers compiled by order.
1837. 1st July. The present system of Civil Registration began.

1896. The Parish Register Society started.  
Annual subscription 21/-. Hon.  
Sec., E. A. Fry, 124, Chancery  
Lane.

This compilation being a descriptive account, with suggestions about the study, of parish registers, the foregoing chronological table will supply all the historical material necessary, and a fuller notice will not be needed, as many of the items are referred to in the following pages.

**Fees  
Chargeable**

The Parish Register is in the custody of the Parson of the parish, and can only be seen and consulted by his permission, for which he is entitled to charge certain fees, viz.: 1/- for the first year searched, and 6d. for each succeeding year; also 2/7 for each certified copy of any entry in addition to the search fee, *i.e.*, 2/6 for the certificate and 1d. for the stamp; therefore each certificate will cost 3/7 at least, the document *must* be signed by the Incumbent or officiating

priest in charge of the parish: a certificate attested by the parish clerk or churchwarden is valueless. A properly signed certificate is received as evidence in Courts of Law, in spite of the doubt expressed by Lord Eldon as to the reliability of the registers, and the opinion of Lord Rosslyn that none of the registers had been kept according to law, and, therefore, all should be rejected as evidence.

**Inclusive  
Charge for  
Literary  
Research**

As insistence on the above fees would amount to a practical prohibition on antiquarian and genealogical research, it is advisable for the investigator to attempt an agreement with the Parson for a lower and inclusive charge for a search, with power to take notes and extracts, certificates being, of course, an extra at the legal charge. This is not difficult to do (parsons are a kindly and reasonable race); the writer, in a

# The Parish

tolerably large experience, has never met with any difficulty, but has found, without exception, that the clergy has always been most obliging, and readily given every facility to a *bonâ fide* and properly accredited person. When the searcher's object is literary and not personal, most parsons will make a nominal charge or allow free access; and, again, the writer cannot express too emphatically his gratitude and obligations to the many clergymen who have afforded him help and encouragement.

## **How to Arrange for a Search**

In arranging for a search, always write beforehand to the Parson informing him of your object, giving references and agreeing on the date, time and place for the visit, *and never neglect to enclose a stamped and directed envelope for reply.* As the incumbent might be from home and another in temporary charge, it is as well, to avoid delay, to address a letter on business



to the "Incumbent" or the "Officiating Minister," and mark the envelope: *Immediate, Parish Business.*

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MARRIAGES, WEDDINGS, MATRIMONIÆ,  
NUPTIÆ, ETC.

**Marriage  
Entries**

Entries of marriage show less variation in registral form than either baptisms or burials: two names and a date is the simplest and most usual, to be amplified occasionally with information as to the bachelordom, spinsterdom, or otherwise of the contracting parties, the parishes from whence they come, and the circumstances of the wedding, whether after banns or by licence, and sometimes details of rank or occupation. Consistent with registration at all nothing can be simpler and balder than:—

1541. Oct. 6th. Robte Parrarde to Ursula Tokelowe. (Ipswich.)

## The Parish

1584. Nov. 25th. John Shakspeare and Margery Roberts. (Stratford-on-Avon.)
1599. Oct. 30th. Henry Kelburne copulatus est matrimonialit cu Anna Fauxe. (Farnham.) (The conspirator's sister.)
1652. Dec. 30th. John Bedford and An Anderson. God send her wel delivered at child-bearing. (Bishop Middleham.)
1747. Oct. 6th. James Hunt and Jane Harris. (Inkberrow.)

Specimens of extra detail are :—

1572. June. Willielmus Jurden accepit, etc., annam Castle in hoc mense in quo die aut loco nescio. (Ship-ton.)
1605. The xxviiiith maii were married John Wittins the yonger of Weeke and Margaret Hardinge the daughter of Robert Hardinge of upto 1605. (Bitton.)
1621. May 1st. Willia. Water, husb. and Elizabeth Haswell. (Bishop Middleham.)

1737. Nov. 13th. William Nash and Diana Hadon by Licence. (Dodderhill.)

**Respect  
expressed by  
Verbosity**

Extra verbosity or detail is usually only found in entries concerning the great families :—

The Right Honourable Lorde John Russell and the Renoumbned Lady Elizabeth Hobbey, married 23rd Dec., 1574. (Bisham.)

The three and twentieth day of ffebruarii Anno Domi 1606 complet—was married Maister Anthony Pell sonne and heire of Sr. Richard Pell of Grantham in the County of Lyncolne knight and Mrs. Elizbeath Willoughbey theldest Daughter unto Sr. William Willoughbey knight of Great Marlow in the Countie of Buck between the howers of IX and XI in the forenoone by vertue of a Lycence granted out of the Courte of the ffaculties of Canter. (Great Marlow.)

# The Parish

## Common- wealth Marriages

During the Commonwealth (1654—1660) marriages were celebrated by Justices of the Peace after notice had been given publicly on three successive market days, and the entries though verbose do not as a rule give more real information than the simplest forms quoted above.

Be it remembered that Thomas Clarke and Marie Collett both of the pish. of Monkfriston hath come before me John Ward of Tanchill in the County of Yorke Esquire one of the Justices of the Peace for the West Ridinge and were married accordinge to the Act in that case made the thirteenth day of Januarii 1654. Jo. Warde. (Monk Fryston.)

The date in the last example relates to the marriage not to the Act of Parliament.

The next specimen contains more information, and also shows the religious bias of the time:—

Be it remembered that upon three severall  
Lords dayes the 27th of May the  
3rd the 10th of June 1655 the pub-  
lication of An Intended Mariage  
betwixt John Shaw of Upton in  
ye parish of Headon and Anne  
Skeath of the same towne and  
Countie singlewoman was publised  
at ye parish Church of Headon at  
close of the morning exercise and  
there was no exceptions to the  
contrary. Thomas Allison parish  
Register.

Bee it remembered that upon the 2th day of  
July 1655 the sollemnizacon of  
mariage betweene John Shaw of  
Upton Loberer and Anne Skeath  
of the same singlewoman was  
sollemnized before me Edward  
Neville Esq. one of the Justice of  
the Peace for this County according  
to the late Act of Parliamt touching  
mariage witnesses Edward Shaw  
& Robt. Skeath. Edw. Neville.  
(Headon.)

**Unregistered  
Marriages**

That marriages occasionally escaped registration may be surmised from the

following :—

MEM.—This seventh day of October, 1724,  
I marry'd William Daniel of  
Whaddon and Alice Fowler of Cal-  
verton (banns being duly published)  
at Tattenho Chapel, where there  
was no register. (Calverton.)

Mention is rarely made of forbidden banns, but an instance here follows.

**Forbidden  
Banns**

“It is to be remembered that the banns were publicly forbid in the Church by (*blank*) Morphey, spinster of this parish, but upon her being then publicly told from the Desk how she must proceed according to the Rubrick, she was advised, it seems, by some to take another method to hinder this man's marriage, and prove herself with child by him before Justice Payton, tho' in the end it appeared she was not.”

Married, Joseph Benge and Betty Liew,  
Nov. 14th, 1732 (Merstham).

So Joseph Benge married the woman of his choice after all, though accused of yielding to a temptation from which his namesake fled.

### **Hardwicke's Marriage Act**

The social confusion and uncertainty caused by the irregularities and facilities for contracting matrimony and the scandal arising therefrom led to the passing of Hardwicke's Marriage Act, 26 Geo. II. After this Act became law the parishes had to provide a Marriage Book, containing printed forms for the uniform registration of banns and weddings. The prescribed form was, however, imperfect, and beyond providing spaces for the signatures of the contracting parties, two witnesses and the officiating clergyman, made no arrangements for recording the essential genealogical details of parents' names, nor occupation, nor age, unless one or both of the parties was a minor.

The following is a reminder of the irregular marriages which brought about Hardwicke's Act:—

1714. July 25th. Henry Cooper and Mary Sisly were married at ye Fleet, London, by Thos. Pretty, who dwells at ye next door to ye Plow in ye Old Bayly. (Newenden.)

“Mock of the Church” *i.e.*, when from some cause, such as forbidden banns, marriage did not proceed, a fine was paid by one of the parties, *e.g.*:—

1805. July 21st, 28th, Aug. 4th. Banns between Joseph Howes, w., and Mary Hurley, single woman, forbidden and the mock of the Church paid by the man. (S. Clements, Ipswich), etc.

**Marriages without Banns or Licence** Up to the date of Hardwicke's Act, marriage by an ordained clergyman of the Church of England without banns or licence



was valid, but irregular; the contracting parties were liable to ecclesiastical censure and the clergyman to punishment. But when the clerk in Holy Orders had neither liberty, reputation nor money to lose, episcopal displeasure had no terrors for him, and the criminous clerks in durance vile drove a positively roaring matrimonial trade. The disreputable and bankrupt clergymen incar-

**Fleet  
Marriages**

cerated in the Fleet Prison made that place notorious for the ease and celerity with which secret or furtive marriage was contracted. The incumbents of certain churches also achieved fees and fame in the same nefarious manner; particularly the Rector of St. James, Dukes Place, Aldgate, London, who claimed "exemption from ecclesiastical jurisdiction," and, ignoring preliminaries of banns or licence, married all and sundry without demur or delay, and on 17th Feb., 1686, was suspended from his clerical

functions for three years as a punishment for his obliquities.

**The "Third  
Party" to a  
Marriage**

It is in the register of Dukes Place that we find a "third party," that is to say, after 1678 a third name occurs in every marriage entry after that of the bride, the name is always that of a man with the contraction "Fr." appended, which probably means "father," and indicated that the individual if not actually the father acted *in loco parentis*, e.g. :—

Francis Windum, Esq., and Sarah Dayrell, s.,  
Thomas Walker. 27th Mar., 1679.

The third name as occurring in this register is probably unique, and in many instances must be that of a relation and therefore of genealogical importance.

The Parish of Trinity, Minorities, claimed an "exemption" similar to that claimed by the Dukes Place establishment, and was celebrated in like manner: between 1676 and 1692, 12,000 couples were there united

indissolubly. Mayfair Chapel was another of these "emergency" matrimonial factories.

**"Marriage  
Shops"**

Most of the large inns in the Liberties of the Fleet served as marriage shops

between 1734 and 1749, among the most famous were the "Wheatsheaf," "Bull and Garter," "Hoop and Bunch of Grapes," "Bishop Blaize and Two Sawyers," "The Fighting Cocks," etc., etc.

People were nearly always baptised where they were born, and most usually buried where they fell, but when it came to getting married they very often exercised a capricious choice, they do so in these days; the practice may be an inherited remanet of pre-historic marriage by "capture," which led so many men to marry their wives at a place where neither had any tie nor associa-

**Popular  
Churches for  
Marriages**

tion. It is quite apparent that certain places were more popular than others for wedding purposes. One

is often struck by the disproportionate fewness of marriage entries in some large registers, and is inclined to think that our forebears either forgot or ignored the ceremony, but for the fact that other registers show a high proportion of the same.

**Wedded  
at  
Weddington**

Out of 275 consecutive entries in Weddington register 115 are weddings, chiefly strangers, who may have been attracted thither on account of its propitious name. In Misterton register (near Lutterworth) up to 1753 the average of baptisms is four or five annually, but the average of marriages is nearly three, between 1650 and 1679 there were 170 baptisms and 75 weddings. Pitchcott (Bucks) shows a similar condition, and at Little Brickhill, in the same County, a small village situated on Watling Street, the large number of marriages is also noticeable; couples resorted thither not only from circumjacent

parishes but from far distant places. The metropolitan emergency matrimonial factories just alluded to need no further mention,

**Phillimore's  
"Marriage  
Register  
Series"**

and the modern popularity of certain London churches, *e.g.*, St. George's, Hanover Square, is well known. The wisdom and expediency of

Mr. Phillimore's "Marriage Register Series" is fully justified, and the value of printing such records as the "Gretna Green" marriage books, and those of other like places cannot be over estimated by the genealogist.

**Singular Mar-  
riage Entries.**

Specimen entries, interesting from their singularity, are :—

1591. On Satterd the XVith of October Nicholas Bamford and Johane Cooke of the parishe of Upton Snodsburie were marryed at St. Andrews in the Citie of Worcester by Mr. Clement Tasker Mynst<sup>r</sup>.

## The Parish

there by a Lycens obtayned from the Ordinary, the Banns beinge but once published in this Parish Church, w<sup>ch</sup> was the Xth daie of October before, for what secreat cause God knowethe. (Churchill.)

1653. Sept. 28th. George and Elizabeth servants of Raph and Robert Mazon. (Bishop Middleham.)

1668. Greens maid of Shenley and one of Whodden married April 6th. (Stony Stratford.)

1766. Dec. 17th. Matthew Dodd and Elinor Foster—

This morning I have put a Tye  
No man could put it faster  
'Tween Matthew Dodd, the man of God,  
And modest Nelly Foster.

(Milverley.)

Nov. 14th. 1736. Resolved in full vestry, that Mr. Henry Stowel have a month's time allowed him to bring a true and legal certificate to this Vestry from the Clergyman that married him and where he is to be found before we give him trouble in D<sup>rs</sup>. Commons. (Merstham.)

It is not uncommon to find entered in the register a statement of the times and seasons during which the Church forbade marriages.

“Honorabile est inter quosvis conjugium et cubile impolutum. Scortatores autem e adulteros damnabit Deus.”  
(Stoke Hammond.)

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QUIS HOMO HIC EST? QUO PATRE NATUS?  
(HOR.)

BAPTISMS, BAPTISMATA, BAPTIZATA,  
RENATA, CHRYSTENINGS, ETC.

**Baptisms** Under one or other of the above headings were recorded the infant arrivals on “the stage of fools.” During the 16th century the baptismal register was a more comprehensive record than subsequently, for the activities of the various sects which arose and developed during the 17th century made the parish register defective as a record of births;

religious or anti-religious prejudice causing many to abstain from the sacrament of baptism. The baptismal entries vary much more in wording and in the amount of information conveyed than either the weddings or burials; the simplest form giving the minimum of information is:—

1588. June 9th. The childe of a poore vagrant woman bapt. (Boughton-under-Blean.)

The next instance does give at least a name:—

1556. Jan. 27th. A child of Robert Welshe bapt. (Bruton.)

The following tells the sex of the infant:—

1539. 10th Oct. John Kitriche bap. (S. Nicholas, Ipswich.)

Examples of the more usual forms are:—

1564. April 26th. Guliemus filius Johannis Shakspere bapt. (Stratford-on-Avon.)



1657. Bapt. Antonius filius Thomae Brough septimo die Juni. (Kirk Ella.)
1682. William s. of William Shakespere of Lowstonford bapt. Oct. 19th. (Rowington.)
1691. Mary the d. of Edward Wells bapt. Feb. 15th. (Rowington.)
1578. Hardolphe Wastnes, sone and heir of Geruase Wastnes, esq<sup>r</sup>, was baptised ye 25th day of January. (Headon.)
1751. Wm., s. of James and Jane Hunt. May 1st. Bapt. (Inkberrow.)
1762. Sept. 19th. Joseph, son of William and Diana Nash. Bapt. (Dodderhill.)
1791. April 5th. Samuel, s. of Joseph and Sarah Nash, of Causey Meadows. Bapt. (Dodderhill.)

**Increase  
of Detail**

The above demonstrate a gradual addition of detail; the mother's name appears, also place of abode, but anything so full of information as the next example is not very common, and seen in only a few registers,

and then only for a few years and at a late period :—

1753. Daniel Hobbs Wells, the son of Mr. Edward Wells, of Eaton, Shop-keeper, and of Sarah his wife, was baptized. (Bletchley.)

In the last we find an early example of double baptismal name, names of both parents, occupation and address. The respectful prefix "Mr." is worth notice, it was not bestowed on every man then; though only a village shop-keeper, Mr. Wells was a son of the geographer, the Rev. Dr. Edw. Wells, Rector of Bletchley. (See D.N.B.)

The next is a rare instance of the mention of three generations :—

1640. Jan. 5th. John S. of Jo. Hutcheson w<sup>ch</sup> was y<sup>e</sup> sonne of Richerd Hutcheson & Elizab. his wife. (Bishop Middleham.)

**Inclusion  
of Godparents'  
Names**

In some registers during the 16th century the names of the sponsors were entered, *e.g.* :—

Rychard Blyke ye sonne of M<sup>tr</sup>. Gabryell blyke whas crystened ye xxv Day of Januarye. M<sup>tr</sup>. Rychart Morton & M<sup>tr</sup>. Wyllyam elton godfathers & Maystres Marye dauys god-mother. (Ledbury.)

In others only the important families were thus honoured:—

Phillip the Sonne of ffrancis Dyngley esquire was baptized the xiiiith daye of Auguste 1603. Suretyes S<sup>r</sup>. Phillipe Kightley and Mr. Phippe Biggs and the Lady Sands of ffladbury. (Cropthorne.)

Cardinal Pole ordered the sponsors' names to be added to every baptismal entry in 1555, but the order appears to have been imperfectly obeyed and after a few years disregarded.

**Avoiding  
Taxation** The duties imposed on register entries, temp. Will. III., had an uncertain influence, some parishes appear to have either largely forgotten baptism or else the

# The Parish

Parson forgot to register, of course to avoid the tax; in others the Parson in his character of tax-gatherer must have looked up the objectors and entered up the births, for we come across such entries as:—

1697. John Fry had a child born in April but not baptised by me. (Tarrant Hinton.)

This register contains several similar entries.

Calverton register has a page appropriated to entries of unbaptised children, 1698—1700; and in Stoke Hammond book is:—

“A register of Births & Burialls According to an Act of par Made in ye yeare 1695  $\bar{c}$  tooke place May ye first of y<sup>t</sup> year,” this heads a page set apart for “ye Births, abortions  $\bar{c}$  burialls of Dissenters,” specimen entry is:—Feb. ye 16, 1696. Edward Bayley a dissenter had a child borne y<sup>t</sup> was not made Xtian according as our Church requireth.

During the period 1654—1660, the legislature ordered the elected “parish register” to enter “births” (not baptisms), but on the return of the clergy to their rights at the Restoration baptisms were again entered, this change is usually markedly noticeable.

## **Private Baptisms**

During the 18th century the custom of privately baptising was very usual, in some registers nearly all the baptismal entries for many years are marked “priv.” This abuse was commented on by Evelyn, who writes “it was due to the pride of women bringing that into custom which was only indulged in case of imminent danger and out of necessity during the Rebellion.”

## **Meaning of “Baptised and Christened”**

Some distinction must be drawn between “baptising” and “christening”; “baptism” is the immersion and naming of the infant,

and "christening" is the public receiving of the infant before the congregation at a service in the church as a member of Christ's flock. During the incumbency of the Rev. Henry Southall, at Kington (Worcester), the entries in the register were as follows:—

1794. Sept. 28th. Tho., s. of Tho. and Margaret Barrett was bapt. and christened in the church 6th Dec.
1795. Rob., s. of Rob. and Mary Baker, priv. bapt. June 14th, publickly christened June 21st.

Probably these private baptisms occasionally escaped registration.

The term "half-baptized" no doubt refers to these private ceremonies; it is defined in the N.E.D. "To baptize privately or without full rites, as a child in danger of death."

1778. June 27th. Rebecca, daughter of Anselm and Rebecca Bayly, born June 23rd, and half-baptized June

27th. Fully baptized April 29th,  
1779. (Westminster Abbey.) See  
N. & Q., 1st Aug., 1908.

**Interesting** Selected instances of  
**Instances** interest are:—

1598. Thomas, the sonne of Stephen Smithe,  
was incorporated into the Church  
of God. 25th Feb. (Stoke Prior.)
1663. Edward and Joseph, sonnes of  
William Laishly, was sprinkled  
31st May. (Bitton.)
1674. Henricus Brooke Filius Thomae  
Brooke Vicarii hujus Ecclesiae  
et Mariae uxoris Die Saturni  
undecimo die Julii natus (circa  
Horam 6-tam post meridianam)  
die Dominico 12<sup>mo</sup> die Julii renatus  
id est Baptizatus fuit Anno prae-  
dicto. (Bishampton.)

**Illegitimacy** Illegitimacy has never  
been an uncommon circum-  
stance at any period of men's history, and  
the evidence of the registers shows that  
sexual morality in England has not varied  
much in quality since registers were insti-

tuted. All sorts of terms are used to indicate this condition, but the word "bastard" is not used anything like so often as its various synonyms; this is as it should be, as the word (of doubtful etymology) is more properly applied to the "bye-blows" of the great than to the produce of proletarian promiscuity. The earliest known application of the term is to the Conqueror, who styled himself, "Ego Wilhelmus Cognomine Bastardus."

Coke (on Lyttelton) writes: *Bastardus est qui nascitur ante matrimonium. Nothus, natus ex patre nobili et matre ignobili: Spurius, natus ex matre nobili et patre ignobili.* Thos. Ridley writes (1636): "Those which were begotten of married women were called *Nothi* because they seem to be his children whom the marriage doth show, but are not: . . . . pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant.



**The Parson's  
Wrath**

*Nothus* and *Spurius* are certainly not used in parish registers in the strict sense above defined, in fact, the terms used varied more according to the righteous wrath of the recording parson, who, perhaps, thereby expressed his disgust at the offence; mark the gentleness of this:—

William, son of Lord Talbot, per Dutchess of Beaufort, ut asseritur, born Nov. 1st, 1743, bapt. Mar. 24th, 1743/4. (St. Pancras.)

And the severity of these:—

1590. John, the son of a strumpet born at Ockleys, bapt. May 28th. (Kington, Worc.)
1697. May 10th. Wm. son of Mary Hewett, the whore, bapt. (Stony Stratford.)
1774. May 22nd. Mary, the beast boarn dau. of Mary More was bapt. (Huddington.)
1788. Sarah, dau. of Jane Beament (prostitute), Oct. 5th bapt. (Tarrant Hinton.)

Other methods of expression are :—

1560. Bridget and Elizabeth, the daughters of adultery, bapt. Jan. 1st. (Chesham.)
1567. Alice, daught. of Margery Meretrix, bapt. Dec. 25th. (Chesham.)
1615. Arthur Cuthbert filius cuiusdam circumforanei, bapt. April 15th. (Woughton.)
1625. June 29th. Lucia f. (ut putatur) Thos. Cock and Eliz. Henbury, alias Pierse, alias Vaughan, meretricis eius et impurissimi scorti, bapt. (Hopton Castle.)
1669. Margaret, the daughter (spuria) of David de la Hay and Jane his concubine, was bapt. Sept. 12th. (Glasbury.)
1702. Dec. 20th. Sarah, illeg. child of Hugh Isaack's wid. by an anonymous father, bapt. (Selattyn.)

**Further Instances** Particulars about paternity are very common, for sharp search was always made by parish officers after the fathers of

illegitimate children to prevent expense to the rates.

1603. Hughe Pigot, a Bastard son of Margaret Pigot begotten as she sayeth by Michael Harrison an hostler dwelling w<sup>th</sup> one Mr. ffroome in London near Newgate att the signe of the seriante Head xped xxxj Julie. (Mark Fryston.)

Katheren Heath, ye daughter of Geoffry Heath yf ye mother of ye child hath fathered it right, was babt. 22nd August, 1613. (Banstead.)

1634. Ann, ye daughter of Joane Money & John Bayley ye supposed father begotten in fornication was baptized March 15th. (Morden.)

1704. 26th Sept. Jane, ye dau. of Susannah Newman, ye father unknown, bap. (Bere Hacket.)

1787. Oct. 28th. Mary, illeg. daugh. of Mary Webb was bap. (P). Her Mother said she was then fourteen years old. (Canon Frome.)

1766. Mar. 3rd. Sarah, the Bastard Dau. of Sarah Smallwood of Eaton, Widow, aged about 50 years was bapt. (Bletchley.)

The above examples are selections only from the numberless entries of similar nature; the forms, words and expressions used are of very great variety. On the whole, as the average entry of a "bastard" contains more detail than that of the legitimate, the genealogist should pay careful attention to these cases and see if the child died, for the mortality among illegitimate infants was much higher than the general infant death rate.

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BURIALLS, SEPULTA, FUNERA, EXEQUIAE,  
INTERMENTS, ETC.

**Burials** It is classed under one of the designations above written that we find the most interesting and informing part of the parish register.

Wedding entries show small variation, and might take place (or not) irregularly and escape registration; baptism, during the greater part of registral time, has not been the custom of a considerable minor faction, and births very frequently escaped the parochial record; but *all* died, and the bodies had to be buried, so we may suppose that fewer of the population evaded the burial than the other sections of the register.

### Instances

Classic elegance appears in some of the following to atone for the minimum of information:—

1569. Aug. 30th. Filia pauperis viatica,  
bur. (Ledbury.)
1585. March 16th. Mendicus cujus nomen  
ignotum est egit, etc., bur.  
(Shipton.)
1587. Perigrina quaedam ultimo die Decem-  
bris, sepult. (Tarrant Hinton.)
1597. Sept. 28th. Greate Xpian, bur.  
(Bruton.)

## The Parish

1654. A woman's male child. Sept. 4th, bur. (Banstead.)
1698. A female infant belonging to a stranger, ye name unknown, bur. (North Luffenham.)
1776. Feb. 22nd. A base child, bur. (Selattyn.)

More exact detail is exemplified by:—

1579. June 26th. Francis Chambers, bur. (Whitburn.)
1569. Jan. 15th. Two child<sup>n</sup> of Richerd Wright, bur. (Bishop Middleham.)
1616. April 25th. Will. Shakspere, gent., bur. (Stratford-on-Avon.)
1623. Aug. 8th. Mrs. Shakspeare, bur. (Stratford-on-Avon.)
1727. Feb. 15th. A poor man, commonly called deaf George, bur. (Edlingham.)
1726. March. Elizabeth Taylor, a Romanist, bur. (North Luffenham.)

Increased information is shown by:—

1587. 8<sup>o</sup> Septembris. Watkin filius Johannis Jackson ex stupro, sepult. (Tarrant Hinton.)

1643. Dorothy Purfery an ancient mayd  
was buried May 8th. (Rowington.)
1687. Joanna Carpenter vidua ad inopiam  
redacta sepulta fuit 11th Feb.  
(Sarnesfield.)
1700. May 23rd. William Turner, son of  
William Turner of this Parish.  
Dyed att sea May ye 23rd. (Lyd-  
linch.)
1767. William, son of Thos. Combes of  
Frensha, and Mary his wife.  
July 14th, bur. (Haselmere.)
1763. July 23rd. Major Rich'd Corbet was  
buried with military honours.  
(Moreton Corbet.)
1800. Henry Davis, Rigway, aged 100½  
years. Jan. 14th bur. (Ink-  
berrow.)

Some genealogical hints are conveyed in :

1614. Mar. 21st. Bur. Stephen Grimesell,  
senex paterfamilias. (Boughton-  
under-Blean.)
1640. Sepult uxor mater uxoris Richardi  
Stevenson. Jan. 11th. (Kirk  
Ella.)

1657. Nov. 26th. Owen Jones, a brother-in-law of John Hall, bur. (Smethcote.)
1663. Nov. 24th. Vincent Downes, paterfamilias, bur. (Moreton Corbet.)
1666. Francis Smith and his mother-in-law was buried 2nd of Feb. (Bitton.)
1611. Sept. 26th. Thomas Robins, the incestuous base child of Thomas Robins, begottene on Mary Hummer, his daughter-in-law. (Bruton.)

The next is a specimen of a useful entry, and not at all common:—

1604. Joan Briant was buried the viith day of December, 1604, and sickoned and made her will nuncupatively the vth of December, 1604, testes Lewys Evans clr. Robert Briant, Margarye Hawkins, and Elizabeth Peerce.

**Obsolete  
Customs**

It is from the burial register that we gather evidence of many forgotten



and obsolete customs, and glean a great deal that illustrates not only local but national history.

1588. Nov. 17th. A Crysumer of Thomas Gooses bur. (Boughton-under-Blean.)
1596. Item on Mundaie the viith daie of ffebruarii, Anne Tandy and her yong innocent, a woman chyld, was buried. (Churchill.)
1599. Willm., the crisome child of Robt. Lyde, of Netherton, bur. 18th Jan. (Crophorne.)

### The Chrysom

At baptism the infant was anointed with chrysm (oil) and wrapped up in a swaddling cloth, called a chrisom cloth, and so clothed until the end of the month, when the mother was "churched," and the chrisom cloth, which was the property of the church, returned. Infants dying less than a month old were called "crysoles," or crisome children. By the Prayer Book of 2 Edw. VI.

(1549) the crisme is especially required to be placed on the child.

“The chrysom and a gracepenny always to be given at ye woman’s churching. The chrysom must be halfe a yard of fine linnen long, and a full yarde in breadth.—Ita testor G. Buddle.” (Wickenby.)

The use of the crysom was probably discontinued in 1552-3, but the word remained in use, as applied to young infants, until well into the 18th cent., and may occasionally be met with in the register, *e.g.*, Monk Fryston, 1655, when the Catholic Church was suppressed and persecuted.

Mrs. Quickly compared Falstaff’s exemplary end to that of “any christom child.”

### **Burial in Woollen**

Every register shows evidence of the “Woollen Acts” and their working, enacted in order that the woollen manufacturing industry should be encouraged in

1666, re-enacted more stringently in 1678, when affidavit was required of a relation at every burial that the Act had been complied with; this law was enforced for a century, and, gradually falling into desuetude, was finally repealed in 1814.

1678. A child of Robert Smithers being ye first corps wrapped in woollen according to a late Act of Parliament. Sept. 16th, bur. (Banstead.)

1680. June 29th. Martha Lake, widow, was bur. in linnen, and information given in to Sir Norton Knatchbull, whereupon he granted a warrant for the levying of five pounds on the goods and chattels of Thos. Lake, in whose house the aforesaid M. L. died, w<sup>ch</sup> warrant was executed, and one moyety of the forfeiture was given to the informer and the other moiety to the poor. (Ashford.)

**Buried  
in  
Linen**

In consequence of half the fine going to the informer, the relatives of the deceased usually arranged that a relation or dependent

should "inform," and thus secure the reward for the family.

1706. Mrs. Katherine Dolben, wife of his Grace John, Lord Archbishop of York, buried in linnen, and the penalty paid. Aug. 17th. (Finedon.)

### Quakers

One good result of the Woollen Act was that it caused the registration of all deaths, for evidence had to be given that every corpse, wherever interred, was wrapped in wool, and the parson, keeping the only recognised record, was the official by whom the Act was administered. Subsequent Acts imposing a tax on register entries also utilised the parochial organisation and the parish priest: "The minister neglecting to make the proper entries in the parochial register shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds" (6 & 7 Will. III.); which can never have been enforced.

1722. Dec. 21st. Received a certificate dated Dec. 15th, signed by Herman Hingsberg and Peter Priest, searcher of the parish of All-Hallows, Lombard Street, London, that Ann How, of Asply, Quaker, dyed of the small-pox and also was buried in woollen. She dyed at London, buried in the Graveyard at Hogsty End in the parrish of Wandon, in a leaden coffin. (Wavendon.)

From 1666 to 1750 Wavendon register contains upwards of 150 entries of Quaker burials at the Friends' Burial Ground, Hogsty End; but for a tax having to be collected and paid these burials would not have been registered in a Church Record.

1580. Anthony Butler, burd. Dec. 13th.  
"Mortuary" Mortuorium prō. eod.  $\frac{3}{4}$  dedit ecclesiae 12d. (Bisham.)

1704. Sept. 21st. Edward Tomkins was buried, Carpenter received of his Executor  $\frac{3}{4}$  for his Mortuary, he dying worth ten markes and under 30 lib. (Wavendon.)

A Mortuary was the second best quick cattel whereof the party died possessed, it is given in lieu of small tythes forgotten. (Fuller). These exactions were forbidden in the case of strangers by 21 Hen. VIII., cap. 6, which prohibited mortuaries from people having goods under £30, then 3/4; under £40, 6/8; over £40, 10/-. It may be inferred that payment was at least passively resisted occasionally, and collection difficult, for Bishop Benson (Gloucester), writing to his successor in the Rectory of Bletchley says: "You must take care to assert your right to the mortuaries . . . if you neglect this at first you will lose them always."

**Burials  
without  
Coffins**

Here and there we find a reminder that burial in a coffin did not become usual until about 1700 or even later. Lord Stowell pointed out that while every parishioner had a naked right of burial in his parish churchyard it is by no means

clear that he has any right to bury a big box (perhaps imperishable) as well. The Church Service directs the Priest to meet the *corpse* at the gate, and on reaching the grave the *corpse* is to be made ready to be laid in the earth.

Probably we are indebted to the Act of 1678 for the particulars entered with burials at Farnham for several years:—

1678. Mrs. Elizabeth Lassels, of Farnham, buried without coffin Jan. ye 2nd, and without any other material then sheep's wool onely, attested by Jane Inchboard and Grace Middleton before Will. Inglby, Kn. & Bart.
1680. Anne, ye wife of Christopher Parret, buried Sept. 11th in a coffin not lined with silke, haire, etc., nor she wrapt or wound up in any other material then sheep's wool onely, attested by Elizabeth Note before Ric. Hutton.

# The Parish

## Details of Coffin

In Farnham register during 1678-81 there are 55 consecutive burial entries giving details of coffin, etc., of these 41 were without coffin, and 14 with coffin, that is about 25 per cent. were coffined. As the parish is said to have contained a larger proportion of well-to-do inhabitants than most places, we may suppose that the 25 per cent. was not attained generally, and that the people was content to bury the dead in accordance with the dictates of common sense and the instructions of the Church.

1604. Jane Clovill, the late widow of Eustace Clovill, Esquier, was buried the 24th June, and the funeral was kept the 8th of July. (West Hanningfield.)

## Sepulchrals followed by Funerals

All burial ceremonies may be reduced to two ranks : for some are funerals, serving for preparation to; and some sepulchrals, serving for placing in the grave the defunct. (The Blaine of Kirkburiall, 1606.) Rich. Este-



broke, vicar of Okehampton, in his will 5th Dec., 1413, leaves to the priests taking part in his exequies and present on the day of his funeral 12d. each; and to each priest on the day of his burial 6d. The celebration of the funeral being an elaborate ceremony, was necessarily some time after the actual burial of the body, and an effigy represented the deceased was used at the state function, a proceeding only possible to the wealthy owing to the expense.

1577. My Lady Ann Dannel, deceased ye 17th of March at 9 or 10 at night, was buryed sollemly the 30th day of May in the yeare aforesaid. Mr. Norris, ye King of Heraulds, was here and Mr. Blake, ye preacher the Bishop of Canterburye's Chaplyn. (Merstham.)

1668. June 26th. The Rt. Honorable. Charles Lord Viscount Ffitzharding was between 12 and 1 of the clock in the night after a sermon preached by Mr. John Randall, then Minst.

# The Parish

of Brewton, buried in the vault in the Chancell in a coffin of lead. (Bruton.)

## Night Burials

Night burial was an occasional custom with the upper classes, but as these nocturnal functions were often scenes of unseemly disorder they were prohibited by Charles I. Torchlight was the natural accompaniment of these ceremonies, the churchwardens as a rule supplying the torches and charging for them. In spite of prohibition the custom lingered on into the last century, and as late as 1823 there was a night funeral with torches at High Wycombe. John Wesley was thus buried at an early hour of the morning on 9th March, 1791, and Mr. Dyott, of Freeford, Lichfield, was so buried about 1890.

1690. Octobris 8th. Robt. Grissold was buried (as wee suppose) in the night. (Rowington.)

**Suicides, etc.**

The last quotation intimates that night burial was not always honourable, suicides and other evil doers were often buried late at night in unconsecrated ground as a mark of ignominy, and the excommuicate, etc., were treated with scornful or maimed rights. Every register contains examples:—

1624. Dec. 24th. John Wookke, excommuicate, buried out. (Bruton.)
1657. A sonne of George Gostley, whom he named George, not baptised, was put in a hole (as he tearmed it) on Mar. 24th. (Little Brickhill.)
1741. Jan. 18th. Eliz., wife of Richard Rogers, dying excommunicate was put into the ground. (Shenley, Bucks.)
1687. Aug. 21st. Thomas Rogers, ye son of John Rogers (who died excommunicated), c̄ Ann his wife was interred, his father was put into ye ground behind ye church without a buriall, but y<sup>t</sup>. of an Asse, but ye son's funerall was cele-

brated according to ye Rites of ye Church, be being a commer to Church, etc. (Stoke Hammond.)

1688. William David, of Talgarth . . . was found dead (it is reported y<sup>t</sup>. he made himself away upon discontent because he shd. not marry his maide. The Lord of ye Mannor seized on his goods, and his body is in Glasbury Churchyard near ye way . . . where noe good Xtians are buried) on ye 27th of November. (Glasbury.)
1627. Nicholas Maultyne hanged himself Dec. 24th and was buried in ye high way ye 26th Dec. (Churchill.)

The above examples show the attitude of the Church towards the evil-doer, suicide and schismatic: a salutary discipline which this present age more than hesitates to enforce.

In Solihull Register are several burials "by women" or by "by laymen," evidently maimed rites and a departure from the usual custom.

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## NAMES.

**Names**

The Parish Register takes precedence of all other records dating from 1538 as being *the* authority for names; indeed, it has been considered that the institution of registers probably caused surnames to become permanent where hitherto they had been loosely applied, for though family surnames were developed and in general use by the 16th century, there is plenty of evidence in the register books before 1600 (and even after) of uncertain surname, also of change, adoption, and acquirement by use.

**Uncertain  
Surnames**

In Bletchley Register, the baptism of a son of Martin, the clerk, is entered in 1577, there are subsequent entries in which Martin is called "the clerk" or "register," finally the surname "Register" cleaves to him, and this may be regarded as an instance of the acquirement of a surname

from an occupation or trade. In the same register may be traced the development of the description "under-the-wood" into the surname Underwood, an example of name derived from locality.

Strangers and immigrants frequently acquired as a surname the description conferred on them by the people among whom they settled.

1699. Alexander Scott, a Scott by nation, buried Jan. 22nd. (Stoke Prior.)
1558. Dec. 13th. Dauyd Apdauyd or Walcheman bur. (Ledbury.)
1619. Jan. 25th. John, ye loder, called John of Battington, bur. (Bruton.)

### Foundlings

Foundlings had of necessity names bestowed on them, often the name of the town or village was given as a surname, *e.g.* :—

1741. Aug. 10th. A child that was found in the Lodge Park was taken up and by order of the churchwardens

and overseers of the poor was bapt. by the name of Betty Keynsham. (Keynsham.)

1797. Sept. 10th. William Keynsham, found in a waggon by Kgs. Arms, bapt. - (Keynsham.)
1744. Aug. 23rd. Frances Ann Newenden, a foundling child, bapt. (Newenden.)

Other names are :—

1622. John Hall (sic dictus fortassis quia in diuersorii nostri Aula baptizatus) was bapt. 20th Nov. and dyed the 28th. (Merstham.)
1744. Mary Bush, a foundling, priv. bapt. 13th Aug. (Little Brickhill.)

Bigland writes (Parochial Registers) :—

“ . . . . that poor infant at Newark-upon-Trent, commonly called *Tom among us*, should afterwards be metamorphosed into the great Dr. Thomas Magnus, that famous non-resident and ambassador.”

### An Alias

An *alias* is fairly often given in the register ; it

may be supposed that many people were either ignorant of or careless about a correct surname; in sequestered rural districts this nonchalant mental attitude may still be met with; the writer knows of several examples. An *alias* may be accounted for in some cases by the obvious circumstance which leads a person to be known by his mother's name as often as by his father's. In early days brothers living in the same place and following different occupations would be differentiated by their neighbours with the names of their trades, and thus acquire an *alias* which might in time become a surname, *e.g.* :—

1559. Edm'nd ye sonne of wyllyam webster  
or tanner whas buryed ye vii. feb.  
(Ledbury.)

**Varying  
Spelling**

Mere difference in spelling does not make a different name, for in the 16th century and even much later the number of letters a



man put into his name was as much a matter of taste and choice, as the number of flourishes he put round his completed signature. The addition or subtraction of that final and silent “*e*,” about which so many moderns are punctilious, does not make another name, *e.g.*, Smyth(e), Green(e), Clark(e), Brown(e), etc.

Though referring to one and the same man or family, the following variants are found in Stratford-on-Avon register:— Shakespear(e), Shakspear(e), Shakspere, Shaxspere, Shaxpear, Shaxpere, Shakspeer, Shaksper; and in fifteen different ways in Rowington register.

Other examples are :—

Dyngley, Dinely, Dingley, Dingleye, Dingly,  
Dinglye, Dinley. (Cropthorne.)

Gower, Gouer, Goor(e). (Inkberrow.)

Bowchier, Bouchier, Boucher. (Clyst St.  
George.)

Brabrook, Bradbruke, Brawbrook, Bradbrock,  
 Bradbrok, Bradbroke, Bradbrook.  
 (S. Nicholas & S. Peter, Ipswich.)

Hemming, Heminges, Hemmyng(es), Hem-  
 ing(e), Hemyng(e). (Rous Lench.)  
 This last is found in Offa's time  
 (757-796) in the epic "Beowulf,"  
 Offa and his son are called "Hem-  
 inges Maeg," *i.e.* kinsmen of  
 Hemming.

"Smith"                      Smith, Smithe, Smyth,  
    Smythe, Smeeth, Smyght,  
 Smyghth, are various spellings of that name  
 whose universal distribution hardly requires  
 mention or proof. Nevertheless, for the  
 purpose of this paragraph, the writer  
 examined the indices of upwards of one hun-  
 dred volumes of printed registers, including  
 all those issued by the Parish Register  
 Society, and found the name in all except  
 one—the exception was Sibdon Carwood—a  
 small register (1583—1812) of less than 23  
 printed pages, though Tarrant Hinton

(1545-1812) only contains one Smith, and his name was Thomas, and he was curate in 1774.

It is an interesting circumstance, and few people know it, that the greatest of Indian warriors, Hyder Ali, was intimidated in the hour of victory by the homeliest of British patronymics: at Mulwagal on 4th Oct., 1768, when "Hurrah, Smith, Smith" was used as a war-cry by the English Army, to lead Hyder Ali to think that the brave and redoubtable soldier, Joseph Smith, was present and in command. (Fortescue.)

### **Extinct Families**

The genealogist must not forget that surnames which are frequent in the earlier years of a register very often disappear after a time; the families die out, but the names may be perpetuated in connection with fields, farms, homesteads, etc., in the parish.

**Change of  
Surname**

Attention may here be drawn to the fact that change of surname is illegal unless effected with the permission of the Sovereign. Under the Roman Law prostitutes were obliged to assume names, and were not allowed to bring infamy on an honourable name. Modern demi-mondaines (the oldest profession in the world) and stage players still follow this custom, a survival of the old law. The illegal assumption of another's name was not tolerated in the 16th century.

“ . . . . why this is flat knavery, to take upon him another man's name. (Act V., sc. i., “Taming of the Shrew.”)

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1665. Old Knockstone, the pavier, bur.  
Aug. 12th. (Stony Stratford.)

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## BAPTISMAL NAMES.

**Baptismal  
Names**

An individual's nominal description consists of the designation he brings into the world with him (surname), and which is derived from the parents; and the personal designation, which is to distinguish and identify him, bestowed by choice of parents or guardians, and which is known as the christian or baptismal name. This last is really and more properly the person's *name*, in the baptismal service the priest says, "Name this child," not "What is this child's name?" and in the catechism the question, "What is your name?" is followed by another question, "Who gave you this name?" and in the marriage service the contracting parties repeat their baptismal name without the surname, clearly showing that the Catholic Church only regards the name bestowed in baptism as the person's real, legal and undeniable name; and there

is not, and never has been, any legal way of changing this name, it is very doubtful if it can be changed at confirmation, as is sometimes supposed. It must be remembered that, however many names are selected, combined and bestowed baptismally on a person, the *whole is only one name*.

The choice of baptismal names in the past would now be considered—especially by the board school and “novelette” populace—as very restricted and commonplace; indeed, it is somewhat a trouble to the genealogist as the frequent repetition of Thomas, John, Francis, Mary, Elizabeth, Catherine, Ann, etc., renders his task uneasy and complicated. In the 16th century (*et circa*) there was an irritating habit of giving the same name to more than one living child, a practice devoid of imagination and fruitful in confusion.

1544. Feb. 10th. Gemini Cocke nominates  
Johes. bapt. (Hopton Castle.)

1564. Nov. 10th. John & John, ye two  
sonnes of Thomas Savye. (New-  
enden.)

1614. Henry Smith, ye second son of that  
name of Thomas Smith, was  
baptised 24th July. (Moulton.)

In the last register Wm. Chapman, bur.  
11th Mar., 1689, is styled *Tertius*.

### Saints' Names

In the Middle Ages it  
was the custom to name a  
child after the saint on (or  
near) whose day it was born, and as 49 days  
in the year are associated in the Roman  
calendar with some saint, martyr, confessor  
or beatus named John, the commonness of  
that name is accounted for. In Domesday  
Book, William is the commonest name, then  
Robert, then Walter; John being far less  
common.

### Uncommon Names

Certain names, now  
not common, were fre-  
quently used in early re-  
gistrar times, Magdalen for instance.

1599. Maudlin Dipple, bapt. 30th Jan.  
(Stoke Prior.)
1573. Maudlin Mynshaw, bur. March xii.  
(Little Brickhill.)
1614. Maudlin, the daughter of Robert  
Barnford, bap. March xii. (Little  
Brickhill.)

In the last-mentioned parish the Church was dedicated to S. Mary Magdalen, and the phonetic spelling gives the usual pronunciation.

The name of Ralph is spelled Raphe, Rayfe, Raff, etc., Crabbe (Parish Register) makes it rhyme with *safe*, and Butler (Hudibras) with *half*.

William is often written Willyam or Wyllyam in accordance with the vernacular pronunciation.

The interchangeability of Agnes and Ann or Annis has been contested, it is worthy of note that in a case, *King v. King*, decided 42 Eliz., the court resolved that the



two names were "several names." (N. & Q. 10 S. viii.)

**Baptismal  
Names of  
the Puritans**

The puritan or biblical fashion of nomenclature seems to have found most favour, *circa* 1600, and the registers show but scarce examples of those ridiculous names of which Praise God Barebone is the best known instance, they were most probably adopted names, or when given to an infant were not bestowed in baptism and therefore escaped registration. Examples of this style are :—

1598. Aug. 20th. Meekness, d. of Stephen  
Juce, bap. (Boughton-under-  
Blean.)
1640. God hath heard, ye sonne of John  
and Dorothy Palmer. Bap. Feb.  
12th. (Rowington.)
1615. Marie, ye daughter of Muchmercie  
Geyles, bap. March 24th. (New-  
enden.)

Accepted Frewin, the Archbishop of York, proscribed by Cromwell, was born in 1588, and received his name in baptism.

Some registers are much richer in uncommon names than others:—S. Sepulchre's, Northampton, contains Abisha, Herodiah, Hortimias, Mehatabel, Peterlaine, Timmatha; North Luffenham yields Bezaliell, Esay, Repent, Patience, Trephosa, Obedience (all before 1600), Anthrea (1614), Obedial (1629), Harboria (1632), etc., and Babolina in 1717. Little Brickhill gives, and not merely once each, Sabine, Sampson, Hadria, Penelope, ffayrefford, Duglas, Athanasius (1575), Embrey, Benedict, etc. Clyst St. George records Pentecost (a girl), Zedwill, Marhoodum, Fitzchakum, Jechezkelem, Pascover (a girl), etc.

**Names of  
Twins**

Twins were very often named Esau and Jacob, Moses and Aaron are also met with, and Joseph and Mary.

**Offspring  
of Tramps**

Peregrine is often met with as a name bestowed on the offspring of tramps and wanderers; these unfortunates were sometimes branded with names indicative of contempt or derision, *e.g.* :—

1773. Thos. Trash, son of Eliz. Nicholls, single woman, buried 23rd May. (Bisham.)
1620. Rahab filia Johanna West, bastard, bap. Dec. 25. (Stratford-on-Avon.)
1594. Lazarus, sonne of a begger woman, bap. 30th March. (Stoke Hammond). And in Westbury we find in 1789, Merry Andrew Munday.
1749. Mar. 1st. Mary all the World. (Bethnal Green.)

**Double  
and  
Triple Names**

The bestowal of a double or triple name in baptism was a foreign custom which was slow in becoming adopted by English people, and did not become general until the 19th century. One of the

earliest instances in England of a double name is that of Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, son of James I. In High Wycombe register the first instance, Katherine Mary, occurs in 1661. In North Luffenham the first occurrence is in 1686, when Mallory John, son of Solomon Wing, was bap. June 9th; there are very few in the whole register. In Canon Frome register about 1700 and onward, several members of the Hopton family received double names, the surname Cope in each case being combined with another name.

In Inkberrow, 1698, a bastard was bap. Francis Churchley (Heming).

### Refugees

The influx of foreigners as refugees into different parts of the kingdom, especially London, would be likely to lead to the local adoption of certain customs such as double-naming, the registers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green show a larger number of entries of

double-names than most places in the 18th century, most of the instances are associated with a French patronymic, and thus demonstrate the alien influence.

**Surnames  
as Baptismal  
Names**                      The use of surnames as baptismal names, though far from common before 1700, was not unknown:—

1616. Nov. 23rd. Shaksper fillius Thomas Quyny, gent., bapt. (Stratford-on-Avon.)

The friend of the dramatist, who thus demonstrates their familiarity, has his name spelled in eleven ways in the register.

**The Foundling  
Hospital**                      After the Foundling Hospital in London was opened in 1741, it was the fashion to visit the hospital on Sunday mornings and stand sponsor to a child. Infants were embarrassed with such names as Abercorn, Bedford, Bentinck, etc. The custom soon ceased in after years, when

sponsors were pursued by those to whom they had lightly given their names, and help asked on the ground of an assumed kinship. Other names inconsiderately bestowed on Foundling Hospital children were those of the famous men of the year or age, *e.g.*, Boscawen, Byng, Benbow, Nelson, Hamilton, Hyde, Parker, etc., etc.

**Theft of  
Distinguished  
Names**

Unconscious compliment is often paid to the owners of a distinguished name by those who, being no relation, bestow it on their children. Possibly that Socialistic tendency which would deprive a man of his wealth, is responsible for the desire to deprive a family of the distinction of its name by appropriating it. It is always a name of sonorous quality or historic renown thus misused. We do not find that names of lowly import are in demand. Of all the great family names unscrupulously annexed, perhaps Howard is

as much abused as any. In 1862, one, Bug, changed his name (which was excusable) to that of Howard (which was inexcusable). In 1895 a libel case, Howard v. Dulau & Co. was tried, and the curious fact came out that the plaintiff was a Maltese, his mother hailing from Mount Lebanon, and the witness considered that the plaintiff's name Howard was an adaptation of Awad!

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“ . . . . It is really convenient to have such a name as is easy of pronunciation, and easy to be remembered, by reason that kings and other great persons do by that means the more easily know, and the more hardly forget us.”—MONTAIGNE.

### Old Age

The number of a *man's* days at the most are an *hundred years*. (Ecclesiasticus xviii., 9.) Since the Christian Era no person of royal or noble rank mentioned in history has

reached the age of one hundred years; and (up to recently) the insurance companies can produce no instance. Without denying the possibility of centenarians, the alleged cases of very advanced age are exceptional enough now to excuse an attitude of incredulity until proof is forthcoming. *Probandi necessitas incumbit illi qui agit.*

**Reputed Centenarians** Every register contains an entry of the burial of a reputed centenarian, some registers contain several. All may be regarded as more than doubtful, as corroborative evidence is invariably wanting. In times when we know that the average duration of life was less than it is now, any old person who had outlived his contemporaries would be regarded by younger persons as older than he really was, and would be exceedingly apt to exaggerate his years in response to a demand for antiquity, and just as easily credited by those who wished to



believe. In times, also, when parents not infrequently gave the same name to more than one child, the death of the elder would facilitate a claim made by a younger to be considered his own elder brother. Mistaken identity may account for some reputed centenarians. Age was seldom recorded in a register unless it was advanced, and doubt was occasionally expressed.

1687. Nov. 8th. Elizabeth Evans, widow, aged above 100 (*ut computator*) bur. (Harley.)
1803. James Tompson, gardner, age 100 & 2 years & 5 months, bur. (Kirk Ella.)
1718. Ellinor Ashpole, aged 120, bur. Jan. 11th. (Little Brickhill.)
1787. John Wood, of Farnham, Dec. 16th. 102½ years, bur. (Farnham.)

In the baptismal portion of the last register we find there entries :—

1687. John, son of John Wood, bapt. Oct. 16th.

1697. John, son of William Wood, bapt.  
April 18th.

If the John Wood buried in 1787 be the one baptized in 1687, then he was 100, not  $102\frac{1}{2}$ , but he is just as likely to be the one baptized ten years later.

1820. June 22nd. William Michael, Llandervally, 100, bur. (Glasbury.)

1721-2. William, ye son of Anne and William Michael, her reputed husband, was bapt. May ye 28th. (Glasbury.)

If the last two entries refer to the same individual, then he was not a centenarian. If the examples quoted can be regarded as specimens of accuracy where verification of a sort seems possible, what sort of error may we expect where no supporting evidence can be found.

1739. Nov. 14th. Jane d. of Francis and Ann Chattereau, born Nov. 13th, bapt. (S. Martin-in-the-Fields). This lady married Robert Williams

of Moor Park, Herts. and died  
8th Oct. 1841. Age 102.

Other sample entries recording age are:—

1808. Bur. Richard Mills, aged 83, the  
oldest inhabitant. (Morden.)
1629. Jan. 14. Ann Johnson, a maid,  
unmarried, died at 111. (Lough-  
borough.)
1698. Charles of Pipton, aged 114,  
as common fame reports, bur.  
(Glasbury.)

**Rank,  
Occupation,  
etc.**

Unless in the case of  
people of superior degree  
and importance, or of  
beggars and paupers, men-  
tion is not usually made in the registers,  
especially in the very old registers, of the  
position or calling of folk. During the latter  
part of the 18th century this detail is recorded  
more often. When occupation or profession  
is entered it is probably correct, but when  
social rank is mentioned, unless proof is  
forthcoming, the statement may be regarded

with a little suspicion. In these days the retired small shopkeeper or pensioned servant and artizan is often erroneously described as "Gentleman" "Gentleman," and none bothers particularly about the mis-description—some derision is manifested and that is all. Up to 1700 or later the rank of "Gentleman" was not bestowed as easily as the modern man bestows or arrogates the higher rank of "Esquire," though even as early as 1660 (*circa*) there was some carelessness evident. ". . . . A very honest man who could not be reckoned among the gentry, though he was called by the name of *Mr. Lomax*." ("Life of Col. Hutchinson.")

1560. Raufe Norwood esquyre and Anne Morton gentyllwomā were maryed together ye xv. day of May. (Ledbury.)

1573. Ye 17th of May was buried Ann Hendly, the daughter of Walter Hendley, Generosus. (Merstham.)

1699. Anne ye wife of ffrancis Jauncey  
Gentn. was Buryed Jan. 27th.  
(Munsley.)
1646. May 10th. Eliz. d. of Mr. Henrie  
Harper, bapt. (Berwick - upon-  
Tweed.)
1596. Sept. 27th. Mr. Willm. Fynney and  
Miss Eliza Bunny Marr. (Ryton.)
1579. Charrolus Tyrrell generosus filius  
Edwardi Tyrrell Armig<sup>r</sup> nascebat<sup>r</sup>  
vero decimo octavo Aprilis baptiz  
abat<sup>r</sup> autem vicesimo quarto  
eiusdem. (Thornton.)

“Esquire”

“The rank and title of  
*esquire* was scarce found  
before temp. Rich. II., but during Henry IV.,  
V. and VI. many were so called wrongfully.  
As for the title of *gentleman*, none was so  
called before Henry VI., and then but  
seldom.” (Habington.)

Sir George Sitwell, in a most interesting  
essay, “The English Gentleman” (Ancestor  
No. I., 1902), writes :—“The premier gentle-  
man of England as the matter now stands is

Robert Erdeswyke, charged in Staffs. indictments with housebreaking, murder, etc. (some gentlemen are such blackguards), in 1413; as a surname 'Gentilman' is met with in the first half of the 14th century. The practice of addressing a mixed audience as 'Gentlemen' cannot be traced before the middle of the 17th century."

**"Syres and ffelowes"** King Henry V. began his address to his army at Agincourt "Syres and ffelowes." The first gentleman to whom a monument was erected was John Daundelyon of Margate. As a matter of fact, the designation was not rigidly defined, but arose to describe that class which was below the great families, but above the labourer and artisan, and contained members of the upper class who were poor, and members of the lower orders who had acquired property.

**"Yeoman"** The description "*yeoman*" appears in the regis-

ters with fair frequency before the middle of the 18th century. A Yeoman was a free tenant, and, as a social rank, came next below the gentry, and above the tradesmen. There was really no distinction nor material difference between the smaller gentry or *squireens* and the yeoman; each owned land and farmed it himself, letting his superfluous acres, if any. The real difference lay in the descent and connection of the gentleman, and his possession of armorial bearings, and the recording of his pedigree at the visitations. The two classes overlapped and intermarried, at every visitation probably some decayed gentry would "disclaim," and some yeoman families would be granted arms and record a pedigree. *Farmer* refers not to the rank, but business of a man. Illustrating the above we find in Wavendon (circa 1695) John Gregory, described in different entries as "yeoman" and "reputed gent."

1721. May 29th. Mr. Honor, of the Parish of Simpson, an aged old man, was buried. (Bletchley.)

The last mentioned man is described on his tombstone as Robert Honner, Chandler and Groaser, his people issued a token in 1655, and he was a man of substance and importance in the small community, hence the "Mr.," for he was not of the gentry.

The citizen or freeman seems to have ranked as a yeoman, and aldermen and some other officers as gentlemen, *e.g.*,

1697. Nov. 18th. John, s. of Mr. John Scott, alderman, bap. (Berwick-upon-Tweed.)

1697. Jan. 22nd. Mary, d. William Lawson, burgs., gentln. (Berwick-upon-Tweed.)

Other entries indicating  
position:—

**Instances**

1718. Nov. 30th. Sir Richard Harnage, a worthy Member of Parliament, bur. (Harley.)



1774. Nov. 27th. John Davies, of Alberbury, a freeholder of considerable property, bur. (Milverley.)
- 1729 Mrs. Mary Styles, of Ditton, was buried in linen and paid ye penalty. (Upton-cum-Chalvey.)

### Mention of Trades

A study of trades, etc., mentioned in a register will convey some idea as to the nature of the population and industries carried on. In the small rural parishes the occupations mentioned refer to the necessary arts of life in a stationary or isolated agricultural community, *e.g.*, Woughton:—baker, blacksmith, butcher, carrier, carpenter, chandler, cordwainer, farmer, grocer, laborer, wheelwright, &c. In Little Brickhill, Bletchley, and Stony Stratford registers the frequent mention of inns, and references to travellers indicate that the inhabitants largely lived on the public travelling along Watling Street, on which these parishes are situated.

1748. Nathaniel Cartwright, of St. Martins, Ludgate, London, Lace Merchant, buried March 3rd. (Loughton.)

Lace-maker is a description very commonly found in most of the registers in North Bucks., and shows that the industry, introduced in the 15th century by Flemish refugees, flourished for centuries and was an important industry.

In High Wycombe "papermaker" occurs in 1659. This is the first mention of an industry which still exists, and being a town of some size, we find such evidences of a "high civilisation" as scholemaster, musician, glover, bell-man of the burrough, apothecary, scrivener, brewer, chirurgion, dancing-master, sergeant of the correction house, victualler, pastery-cooke, haberdasher of hatts, fishmonger, etc., all mentioned 1681—90.

**Descriptive Entries**                  Descriptive entries  
are:—

1579. Elizabetha, filia Gulielmi Demock hominis plebeii moriebat<sup>r</sup> Septembris decimo septimo: sepeliebat<sup>r</sup> vero decimo nono eiusdem mensis. (Thornton.)
1783. Piping John from Lincoln, P., bur. Oct. 23rd. (Walesbury.)
1619. Mary, daughter of Richard Johnson, free mason, bap. 7th Jan. (Coleby.)
1630. Richard, sonne of Richard Johnson, rough mason, bap. 17th July. (Coleby.)
1585. June 10th. Nicholas the Surgin was burid. (Stoke Prior.)
1728. Mr. Thomas Woodcock, ye Dissenting Minister of Upton, widower, bur. March 26th. (Overchurch.)
1631. June 12th. Margaret Howells, Widow, foriner, bur. (Pitchford.)
1758. Mr. Richard Glanviel, Docter and Solger, was bur. Oct. 12th. (Haselmere.)
1635. Nov. 26th. Johannis Hall, medicus peritissimus. (Stratford-on-Avon.)

The last was son-in-law of Mr. William Shakspeare, playwright and retired actor-manager, formerly lessee of the Globe Theatre, Southwark.

**The Parish Clerk** Next to the Parson and the Squire, two of the best known people in a village community were the Parish Clerk and the Midwife, the two functionaries who officiated at the entry and departure of the individual on this life.

Concerning the first of these two we often find the scale of fees due to him and the rights of his freehold entered in the register, and entries of his burial with a record of his term of service occur in almost every book :—

1639. John Hopkins aged 90 years  $\bar{c}$  upwards bur. 13th Mar. having been Clarke 60 years or more. (Great Brickhill.)

1717. Mar. 11th. James Howett of Bolton  
& Parish Clerk for fifty years &  
more bur. (Edlingham.)

During the Commonwealth it was enacted that the Parish Clerk was to be elected by the people and called the *Register*. His duty was to keep the register book and perform most of the duties of the clerk's office. The election is recorded in nearly every register as taking place according to the law.

1653. Nov. 28th. John Monday sworne to execute ye office of a Register, etc. (according to An Act of Parliamt Dated ye 24th Aug. 1653) according to his best skill & knowledge, etc. (Merstham.)

Occasionally a parish clerk was a man of good family. There are plenty of instances of clergymen being appointed, also J.P.'s and M.A.'s, especially in London. (N. & Q., 10 S., viii., 517.)

1746. Nov. 3rd. Margaret, "ye wife guest  
of ye Parish of Llandysilio," bur.  
**Midwives** (Milverley.)

The male accoucheur was almost unknown in the 17th century, and but rarely employed before the middle of the 18th century, before his coming the wife-guest, mid-woman or mid-wife attended practically all births. So oft needed and useful a person was sure to be well known, and at her death mention of her occupation was made in her burial entry. The midwife in *Tristram Shandy* was a widow, and her skill consisted in trusting to the power of "dame nature," so apparently did all of her kind, and if to the two essentials of widowhood and ineptitude she added the qualification of senility, her obstetric reputation was made. Crabbe (the Parish Register) thus aptly describes the type:—

. . . . . Next the name appears  
With honors crowned and blest with length of years

. . . . .  
A Matron she, whom every village wife  
View'd as the help and guardian of her life.

. . . . .

In her experience all her friends relied,  
 Heaven was her help and nature was her guide.

. . . . .  
 With luck and her the poor remained content.

**Profane  
 Midwives**

In the 16th century midwives were often accused of disorderly practices, more especially of using profane words when baptising the infant in cases where death was feared. The Church therefore licensed midwives, and administered an oath in which the woman swore to "exercise the office according to such cunning and knowledge as God hath given me," and above all in baptising, to use the proper formula.

1570. Jhoane, ye Doughter of Jhon Counde, was buryed ye Dec. xii, and chryst ye same day by ye mydwyfe at home: obula ad funes campaniles. (Ledbury.)

Other sample entries are:—

1681-2. Jan. 10th. Joane Norman, an ancient widdow and midwife, bur. (Misterton.)

1604. Mary Finlow, wid. and midwife,  
bur. Jan. x. (Little Brickhill.)
1787. Thomas, son of William and Ann  
James, Aug. 5th, bap. (His name  
was not Thomas but William and  
was born 16th June, as appears  
by Mrs. Hold's, the midwife's,  
book.) (Clunbury.)

### Copying and Indexing

To get at the whole of the story told by the Parish Register is a work which demands close attention and careful labor, and which is well repaid by the results obtained. Such a work is the very first thing to be done when one is attempting the History of a Parish. The whole register must be copied and indexed, for which enterprise the neophyte (or even the expert) will prepare and fortify himself by studying and following the directions given by Mr. W. Phillimore, in his pamphlet on "Parish Registers"; this is essential, in order to ensure that uniformity of work and practice with others which facilitates cross reference



and comparison. As an uniform system of transcription, indexing, arrangement, etc., is most desirable, it is well for every fresh laborer in this vineyard to acquaint himself, before beginning his work, with the most approved methods and to consult an expert. The drudgery of copying and indexing should not be delegated, but should be done by the "historian" himself, who is thereby familiarised with names, families, etc., and saved much looking-back at a later stage.

### Statistics

Transcription done, the register must next be analysed

by counting every entry and arranging the numbers as under (from Bradley Green) :—

Year	Male Baptisms	Female Baptisms	Male Burials	Female Burials	Weddings
1614	2	9	3	1	—
1615	6	5	6	3	4
1616	1	3	6	3	2
1617	2	6	4	—	—

By this arrangement years of excessive mortality and other variation are easily perceived.

### How to estimate Population

The population may be estimated, by taking the annual average of any selected period of ten consecutive years of baptism, and multiplying that average by 30. This method, recommended by Mr. Marcus Rubin, and said by him to give a result within 10 % of either excess or defect, has been used by the writer in cases where the actual population is on record and been found to work out fairly satisfactorily, *e.g.* In Wavendon, 1676, the population was estimated by Archbishop Sheldon's census at 400; the average of 12 baptisms multiplied by 30 gives 360, and it is to be remembered all births would not, at that time, be recorded.

### Censuses

The first systematic Governmental Census was taken in 1801, and has been repeated every ten years since. Before 1801 the exact population was never known, and when

about 1780 it was feared that the population had decreased since the Revolution, an attempt was made to verify that hypothesis by applying to the clergy for figures. In 1781 each incumbent received a printed form, which he was asked to fill in with the numbers of baptisms and burials entered in his parish register for the three periods, 1688—1697, 1741—1750, and 1771—1780.

All through the 18th century England was at war, and there was a constant drain on the manhood of the country. In baptisms the males exceeded the females in number. In the burials the reverse usually obtains. This may be accounted for by the fighting services absorbing so many young men, *e.g.* :—

		Males Bapt.	Females Bapt.	Male Burials	Female Burials
Bishop Middleham	1559-1812	2134	1963	1435	1488
Wavendon	... 1567-1812	1737	1530	1267	1340
Bletchley ...	... 1577-1812	2640	2509	2268	2389
Inkberrow	... 1675-1775	1488	1361	1340	1429

In the last quoted parish the period contains all the burials from two adjacent small parishes, which did not baptise at Inkberrow.

Fortescue ("History of British Army") states that the number of recruits enlisted during the period 1793—1800 was 210,000 men. Probably the West Indies alone in that time consumed 100,000 British, whom the policy of Pitt and the culpable ineptitude of Dundas (War Minister) sent thither to death, and this is exclusive of the navy and army service elsewhere.

**Infantile Mortality**                      Infantile mortality, that is, deaths of infants under one year, must be calculated by examining the baptisms entry by entry, and then examining the burials in the same way, to see if the infants were buried within twelve months, *e.g.*, from Olney.

1678. Ann Odall daught<sup>r</sup> of John, bapt. Sept. 18th.

1678. Ann Odill, daught<sup>r</sup> of John, bur. Sept. 29th.

**Proportion of  
Male to  
Female Births**

When the parents' names are not given, identity can not be established, nor conclusion drawn. In well kept registers the usual infantile death rate is found to be about 25 %—the modern proportion is under 12 %. The proportion of male to female births is easily made out; Wavendon gives 113·5 boys to 100 girls; Bletchley, 105·2 to 100; Moulton, 106·3 to 100; Bishop Middleham, 108·7 to 100; and Crophorne (1557 to 1717) 118 to 100. These proportions show a much higher excess of males than is now the case, the modern rate in England being about 103 boys to 100 girls.

**Frequency  
of  
Plural Births**

The frequency of plural births is also easily calculated. Wavendon shows one case of twins in 73; Bletchley one in 70; Moulton one in 79; Bishop Middleham one in 74; modern rate is about one in 90.

Triples are not at all rare, Bishop Middleham register records three cases.

The mortality in twins and triples was very high, most of them died.

Roxton (Beds.), 21st Sept., 1665. Faith, Hope, Charity, Mercy, four daughters of John and Eliz. Longsdon, bapt. The mother was buried 5th Oct., 1665.

**Mortality of  
Women in  
Childbirth**

The mortality of women in childbirth, dead on the field of honour, must be discovered by a study of the baptismal entries singly, and then examining the burials for one month after the date of baptism, when if the mother be found to have been buried, she may be considered to have died in consequence of childbirth, as all deaths of women within a month of childbirth are nearly always the result of parturition. This method is naturally only of value when the name of the mother is

given in both bapt. and bur. entries, and is only put beyond all doubt when the name of the husband or father accompanies it, sometimes the cause of death is given, and this makes certain; in those cases of women dying undelivered, or after the birth of a still-born child, there will be no baptismal entry and no means of finding out, therefore these cases must escape identification. In making the above investigation the most scrupulous care is necessary, and it is better to reject those suspicious cases which lack reasonable circumstantial confirmation.

1663. Oct. 19th. Jane, late wiff to Andrew Coaman, died in childbed, bur. (Edlingham.)

The last, perhaps, died undelivered, as there is no baptismal entry.

1584. Mar. 29th. Wm., s. of Jo. Graye, bapt. 1584. Apr. 26th. John Graye's wife bur. (Bishop Middleham.)

1682. Mar. 20th. Elizabeth, daughter of Thos. Etheridge, bapt. (Cropthorne.)
1683. Apr. 2nd. Eleanor, wife of Thos. Ethridge, bur. (Cropthorne.)
1683. Apr. 8th. Elizabeth, daughter of Thos. Ethridge, bur. (Cropthorne.)
1660. Feb. 22nd. Bridget, the wife, and Timothy, the sonne, Bridget and Elizabeth, the daughters, of Thomas Norman, buried all in one grave, and all in one coffin. (Bletchley.) These triplets were baptized on 19th Feb.

Analysed in the manner above described, the writer found in Bletchley one maternal death to 83 births; in Cropthorne 1 in 85; in Bishop Middleham (those years admitting analysis) about 1 to 80, etc., etc. The real mortality was probably higher, say 1.5 %, or even 2 % in certain districts. The modern rate is 1 in 250.



**Years of  
Excessive  
Mortality**

Every register shows years or periods of excessive mortality, *e.g.*, 1593-5, 1602-3, 1625, 1631, 1637-44, 1657-8, 1665, 1680-3, 1713-6, 1727-30, etc. All these times, extracted from a study of many registers, coincide with the prevalence of some known historic epidemic, which affected nearly the whole kingdom, there were also local epidemics. Reference to "Creighton's Epidemics" will help an investigator to surmise or fix the cause of the high death rate in certain years. It must be borne in mind that an epidemic never affected the whole of the kingdom at one time, but travelled over it, affecting districts at some distance from its origin at a later date, *e.g.*, the plague which ravaged London and the South in 1593-5, ravaged the North in 1596-7. The study of the years of extra burials in different registers will enable one to trace the course of an epidemic over the kingdom.

**Plague**

In early registral times the eastern or bubonic plague was the dreaded scourge, deaths from this cause are often indicated in a register. In Penrith the average of burials was 40 to 50 per annum; the plague appeared, and in 1597 there were 202 burials, in 1598 there were 592, of which 565 were plague, and then in 1599 there were only 19 burials. On Sept. 22nd, 1597, is the entry of burial of Andrew Hodgson, a stranger, followed by the note "Here began the plague, God's punishment in Penrith."

In parish history the prevalence of an epidemic may explain the decline or temporary eclipse of the prosperity of a place, owing to depopulation, rise in the poor rates, avoidance of the district by strangers, and consequent crippling of the financial resources, etc., *e.g.*, in 1665 Fenny Stratford lost in a few weeks about half its inhabitants from plague, as the place was situated on the

London to Chester road, Watling Street, the most important high-way in England, travellers avoided it, the stream of traffic was diverted through Woburn; and Fenny Stratford, which depended for its existence upon the wayfarers who used its inns, lost its trade and for several years was ruined by the loss of custom (see Bletchley Register).

**Malaria in  
1657—9**

A marked rise in the death rate is exhibited by all registers during 1657-9, when malaria was both general and fatal. In 1658, Cromwell died from it. During 1710-16 a rise in the annual death rate is manifested, caused by influenza. Hearne refers to it " . . . . I call it a feaverett, it being a small fever, that at this time goes all over England. It seizes suddenly, and holds generally but three days. . . . ."

**Influenza in  
1728**

During the period 1727-30 there was a very great increase in the annual

number of deaths, it is not uncommon to find a comment on it in a register, *e.g.*, Great Hampton calls 1728 "Lethifer Annus," etc. Influenza spread from the Continent in 1728. Chambers, in "Domestic Annals of Scotland," writes:—"A cold and a cough, with fever laid hold of nearly every person, sometimes in a moment, as they stood on their feet, and in some cases attended with raving." In Selattyn Register it is noted, 1727, sickly time; 1728 (Aug.), a very sickly season; 1729 (April), corn very dear—a very sickly time; July, the sickness continues.

In 1782 the "'flue" was again prevalent, and mention is made of it in Selattyn with the remark "which happily was not very mortal, . . . scarcely one escaped this distemper."

**Smallpox** Smallpox was always prevalent in this country, but its ravages were eclipsed by the plague. Since the disappearance of the latter in 1666

the former reigned supreme as the most deadly foe to life and health in these islands, until vaccination scotched it first and conquered it afterwards. Mention of this disease is common in the registers. It was endemic, and local outbreaks were common, *e.g.*, at Burnham, in 1768, there were 78 deaths, including 30 from smallpox. The horror and terror with which it was regarded are evidenced by many an entry.

1695. Mary, the daughter of Thomas Willis, Esq., and Alice, his wife, was buried 7th June. (Calverton.)

This was a sister of the antiquary, Dr. Browne Willis. In 1724 Sir Holland Egerton, writing to Dr. B. Willis, congratulates him on the recovery of his children from smallpox, "a happiness I should highly prize."

**Deaths from Violence**                      Except the diseases just mentioned, the cause of a death is seldom registered unless from violence. Specimens are:—

1729. July 17th. Richard Cowper agricola tonitru et fulgore occisus, bur. (Hackness.)
1790. April 16th. Sard d. of John & Jane Jones. Chincough, bur. (Selattyn.)
1795. June 5th. John Beadle. Mercurial application, bur. (Merstham.)

### Historical References

Few Registers are without some reference, either direct or indirect, to the general history of the realm, and in those places where great events have happened, the references are many and full, *e.g.*, Berwick-on-Tweed teams with entries relating to soldiers. But it is in small and unimportant villages that this class of entry has its chief value, as demonstrating filaments of connection with great events, thus bringing home to every corner of the kingdom a sense of national unity and share in stirring deeds. Many books, especially in the earlier years, date by the regnal year of the monarch. Walton, for instance, indicates 1602 as "Finis

Regni Elizabethæ Reginae," and 1603 "Initium Regni Jacobi." Clyst St. George styles 1649, "Anno 1<sup>mo</sup> post decollationem Regis Caroli primi;" and so each year to 1660, which is styled "Anno 12<sup>mo</sup> Caroli Regis secundi." The death of the King is not infrequently entered, Fenny Stratford and Little Brickhill record the demise of George II.

Selattyn enters the deaths of Elizabeth, James I., Charles I., who "suffered martyrdom upon a scaffold," George I., "of an apoplectick fit at Osnaburg," and Queen Caroline in 1737.

**References  
to the  
Civil War**

References to the Civil War abound. Bruton records in 1625 that the King "herd a sarmon in Breweton Church, preached by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, from the text 'Let God arise and let his enimies be scattered.'" In 1642 the same register records in verse a defeat

of the Parliament Army, and notes in 1644 a visit of the King and Prince, and in 1660 the Restoration. The persecution of the Catholic Church is often mentioned; as in Rowington, 1655—1662, “by usurped authority these many yeares wrested wrong fully out of my liueing.” In 1643 Hopton Castle register: “Mar. 13th: Occisi fuere 29 in castro Hoptoniensis inter quos Henricus Gregorye, Senex, et comeraneus meus.” In Little Brickhill, 1642, Agnes Potter, of Dunstable, wounded at the battle of Edge Hill, was buried November 30th. Burials of single, nameless soldiers are common during this period.

**Alteration  
of the  
Calendar**

The alteration of the Calendar by the Act 24, Geo. II., c. 23, is commonly noticed, but not invariably, some registers continuing the old style for a few months, and then adapting to the new style without comment. The correcting



took place officially on the 2nd Sept., 1752, the following day becoming the 14th. Russia is now the only country adhering to the old style. Westbury enters, Edaw. Troutbeck, vicar, bur. 7th Oct., 1752 new style, 26th Sept. old Style.

**“ Briefs ”**

The system of collection of funds for the relief of distress by “Briefs” (now replaced by the Mansion House Fund), also acquainted rural populations with some of the events occurring in the outside world. Briefs with the amount collected on them are often found entered in the register. In Calverton book are entered, among others, briefs for:— 1670, Captives in Algiers (this would inform inland people that Algerine pirates occasionally landed in England, robbed, ravaged and carried away captives for the sake of ransom). In 1679, for building the Cathedral of St. Paul; in 1689 for persecuted Irish Protestants, “Madame Bennet, with all her wealth, nothing!” etc.

**Historical Illustrations**      Other historical illustrations are :—

A.D. 1595. This tyme was a great goinge into Ireland against the Earl of Tyrone the clergey payed deerly. It cost the Vicar of Aston xxli marks. (Aston-juxta-Birmingham.)

1605. Bur. Old Mr. Greene, of Castle Bromwich, a true professor of the Gospell, and p'secuted in Queene Marie's tyme for his religion, 25th Feb. (Aston-juxta-Birmingham.)

Bruton mentions in 1624 the departure of men from that parish to the siege of Breda.

Stoke Hammond mentions Thomas Lorkin (1624) "He was employed in France in solliciting the French marriage and was drowned on his return."

In Portsmouth register is the entry in 1662 of the marriage of Charles II.

In Yarm parish register is entered the burial in Feb., 1746, of Thos. Brown, ye

Dragoon. (This was the valiant soldier who, in 1743, at Dettingen, recaptured the British Standard, which had fallen into the hands of the French; he was then 25 years old. In retaking the flag he slew several men and received, as he cut his way through the French, about a dozen wounds. The King bestowed a pension on him of £30 a year.)

In Bincombe register, 1801, are entered the burials of two German soldiers, shot for desertion from the York Hussars; and in S. Sepulchre's, Northampton, in 1806, are the burials of six soldiers of the German Legion. These entries show that in times of stress the kingdom needed the service of foreign soldiers.

Winslow records:—20th Nov., 1830. William Ovitts buried. (He was the second man enlisted in Elliott's Light Dragoons in 1758. At the battle of Freyburgh, the Prince of Brunswick was captured by French Dragoons. Ovitts, single handed, rescued

the Prince, and killed three of his captors, but was badly wounded himself. The Prince had him cared for and gave him 100 guineas. After leaving the army he lived at Winslow, and the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos settled on him a pension of 1/- a day.)

1805. Feb. 22nd. Buried James Robinson  
(wounded at Fontenoy.) (Keyn-  
sham.)

At the last reminiscence of warlike glory there rises a vision of heroic grandeur, for here was no excitement of charge nor whirlwind of rushing horse, that stately, unhurried and deadly parade of silent, scarlet-clad infantry with shouldered arms up the mile-long natural glacis of Fontenoy, through front and cross-fires towards an invisible foe. The arrival at the French trenches, the scornful invitation of Lord Charles Hay that the French should fire first, and *then* the hitherto shouldered muskets were levelled,

# Register

III

and with crash upon crash the disciplined volleys rolled from end to end of the scarlet line, carrying annihilation to the opposing ranks.

These men left their homes by the hundred and straggled back, maimed and enfeebled, by twos and threes. The majority died in foreign lands. "They lay aloft, put to sleep with swords." Their names are forgotten.

As a general statement, we may say that every Englishman there had his native parish, was baptised in his parish church and entered in its book. "But some there be which have no memorial." The time, place and manner of their heroic death is written in no record, and their names in no Parish Register.

WILLIAM BRADBROOK.

BLETCHLEY,

BUCKS.

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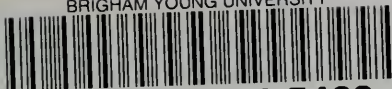








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